

## Impact case study (REF3)

<b>Institution: Canterbury Christ Church University</b>		
<b>Unit of Assessment: 19 - Politics and International Studies</b>		
<b>Title of case study: ICS19.02 Politically Engaged Artistic Practice: Changing the Lives of Young People Through the Tate Exchange Programme</b>		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2007-2020</b>		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b> Professor David Bates	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b> Professor of Contemporary Political Thought	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b> 2001- present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2017-20</b>		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N</b>		
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>In partnership with the Tate's innovative social engagement programme 'Tate Exchange', Bates has collaborated with schools and community groups in Dover and the Rhondda Valley to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Successfully challenge the Tate to change their approach to socially engaged practice, focusing on the involvement of and engagement with marginalised groups of young people.</li> <li>2. Work with and alongside community practitioners and marginalised groups to develop and embed new forms of socially engaged practice (Politically Engaged Artistic Practice). This has facilitated the change in 1.</li> <li>3. Develop the agency, confidence and political knowledge of young people so they themselves can effect change.</li> </ol>		
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>The research insights underpinning this case study were developed between 2007 and 2020 at Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU). These insights are both theoretical and practice-based. The practice-based component (which embodies a model of practice which we term 'Politically Engaged Artistic Practice' [R6]) builds on already published theoretical work [R1; R2; R3; R4; R5], and was developed in long-standing (more than 4 years) collaboration with our community partners and practitioners in the context of the Tate Exchange Programme [R6]. Our partners included Astor College, Dover; Dover smART Project (both situated in Kent); and Valleys Kids (situated in Rhondda Valley, Wales).</p> <p>The theoretical work has demonstrated how political theory can help to address issues which relate to the lived experience of real people – such as poverty, marginalisation and exclusion. As such it is a form of applied political theory. Key insights of this work include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That hierarchical strategies of politics are damaging and counter-productive to the interests of marginalised individuals and groups. [R1-5]</li> <li>2. That negative 'othering' has a detrimental impact on the sense of power and agency of marginalised individuals and groups. [R1; R4; R5; R6]</li> <li>3. That socially engaged artistic practice is particularly effective in activating the agency of politically disaffected marginalised individuals and groups. [R6]</li> </ol> <p>Through the practice of co-creation which Politically Engaged Artistic Practice embodies, we developed further insights: That our young participants did not consider traditional politics as an effective arena for expressing their voice, and for addressing those issues which concern 'people like them'. This does not mean that they were not political. Once in an encouraging space our young people developed a power and consequent agency to engage head-on with the political issues impacting their lived experience. But such space has to be created; this is challenging</p>		

because elite art institutions often find the power and agency of marginalised young people to be threatening, and so construct barriers to inclusion. These insights are evidenced in our co-created exhibitions (see Section 4). Building on these insights, we developed the following findings which comprise the basis of our practice [R6]. These can be stated as:

1. Practices of non-hierarchical politics can help young people to combat marginalisation and negative othering, and therefore effect positive change. This means that participants will value themselves and their work – and therefore demand respect from others - if they are equals in the process of creating that work.
2. Non-hierarchical practices are more effective at engaging politically the everyday lived experiences of participants, than ‘top-down’ approaches which seek to ‘help’ rather than work ‘with and alongside’ [a key concept of R6].
3. Affective, playful and joyous practice – influenced by the best of socially engaged ‘live art’ – enhances the agency of participants, and their confidence to assert their political voice and power.

Politically Engaged Artistic Practice can be (and in our work has been) an effective way of critiquing elite art institutions, and influencing them to institute positive change. We found that we can work ‘with and alongside’ our participants to change for the better what Tate does.

### 3. References to the research

R1. Bates, D. (2011) ‘Immaterial Labour and the Retreat from Class’, *Studies in Marxism*, 12, pp. 51-77.

R2. Bates, D. (2012) ‘Making Politics Matter’: Political Education in a ‘Knowledge-Exchange Context’, *European Political Science* 11, pp. 164-174.

R3. Bates, D., Ogilvie, M. and Pole, E. (2015) ‘Occupy in Theory and Practice’, *Critical Discourse Studies* 13:3, pp. 341-355.

R4. Bates, D. (2017) ‘Situating Hardt and Negri’, in A. Prichard et al. (eds) *Libertarian Socialism: Politics in Black and Red*, Oakland, CA: PM Press, pp. 275-293. (Hardback published in 2012.)

R5. Bates, D. (2018) ‘Agency’, in B. Franks et al. (eds) *Anarchism: A Conceptual Approach*, London: Routledge, pp. 60-73.

R6. Bates, D. and Sharkey, T. (2020) ‘Politically Engaged Artistic Practice’, *Tate Papers*. No. 34/2020.

R1, R2, R3 and R6 were published in journals with a rigorous anonymous peer review process. R4 and R5 are chapters in books edited by leading academics in the field, and also underwent extensive editorial review. R1 and R2 and R4 were returned to REF2014. R3 and R6 were returned to REF2020. R1-R5 comprises underpinning theoretical work. R6 articulates our model of Politically Engaged Artistic Practice.

### 4. Details of the impact

On 31<sup>st</sup> May 2019, young people from Astor College, Tower Hamlets, Dover (in the top 20% of the most deprived areas in the UK) chanted their own political slogan (‘What is art? This is art!’), while banging drums, as they danced through the Blavatnik Building, in the Tate Modern. They were followed around the space by young people from Valleys Kids in the Rhondda Valley (the 4<sup>th</sup> most deprived area in Wales), and members of the public who had got caught up in an incredibly moving moment. This was a milestone in a journey of community engagement. It was also year three of

our co-created work with Tate Exchange. Since 2017, **7,997** international visitors to Tate Exchange have engaged with our work [S7; S8].

We have developed an approach to politically engaged artistic practice [R6], which makes key themes of political theory [R1-R5] relevant to the lived experience of young people.

### **Impact 1: Successfully challenging the Tate to change their approach to socially engaged practice**

Awareness of Bates's work by the Director of Learning and Research at Tate led to an invitation for Canterbury Christ Church University to become a Founding Associate of Tate Exchange [S2]. Since 2016, there have been **323,062** visitors to Tate Exchange; our practice has shaped its programming and culture. [S7; S8]

Tate Exchange was imagined as a space to challenge the elitism often evident in traditional gallery spaces. We helped Tate to understand this challenge, and to deliver change through co-creative practice. Bates developed work with Valleys Kids (specifically with the Artistic Director of Sparc) [S3] in a partnership which has harnessed the power of young people to effect change.

Our work involved a loud and celebratory occupation of the Tate Modern gallery (characterised in R6 as 'progressive exclusion'). This led to challenging conversations and key changes. Tate leadership, report of a new staff training programme and attitudinal change by the curatorial team. This includes a commitment to programming which deals politically with lived experiences of 'non-traditional' audiences [S1; S2]. It also led to an invitation by Tate's Director of Learning and Research to publish R6. The Head of the Tate Exchange programme refers to our work as a 'game-changer' for Tate practice [S1]. Tate's Director of Learning and Research writes of how this work has fed

'directly into how we [Tate] have thought about engaging with participants from marginalised groups and communities, and importantly (re) thinking what Tate Exchange is for and could be...' [S2]

As a result of Tate developing more inclusive practices of programming and curation, our young participants have been able to create politically focused work which has enhanced their sense of agency. As one young participant stated:

'I didn't know that the Tate could be used as such a political movement. The way that we were able to use the space in the Tate to interact with the public and everyone could get involved, outside of the standard expectation of art.' [S6]

### **Impact 2: Working with and alongside community practitioners and marginalised groups to develop and embed politically engaged artistic practice**

A co-funded artist's residency to the value of GBP 10,000 with the Live Arts Development Agency (LADA), was an initial spur to our practice [R6; S9; S10]. But it is our community groups and young people who have provided its power and creativity. The CEO of Dover smART (an organisation which uses art to support disadvantaged young people in Dover) has noted how the project enhanced practitioners' political agency and that of service users [S4]. The Artistic Director of the Valleys Kids Sparc programme insists:

'Through this collaboration we were able to produce some exceptionally powerful work which explored issues such as marginalisation, gender and class identity... Without encountering Professor Bates's work through Tate exchange, we would not have had the opportunity to discover how work in political theory could possibly inform what we do...' [S3]

This work then effected the change detailed in Impact 1 [S1; S2]. The reach of this work has gone beyond Tate Exchange, with a legacy which feeds back into our communities. During lockdown,

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Dover smART have included our co-created work on power and politics in creative arts packages distributed to over **3,000** of the most vulnerable members of the community. The CEO of Dover smART states:

‘We have adapted and repurposed materials from our work on the theme of Power with Canterbury Christ Church and have delivered these in Creative Care Packages sent out to the vulnerable groups and individuals with which we have been working.’ [S4]

Work resulting from these packages will be part of an online exhibition in 2021 – which addresses the theme of power, love and mutual aid.

### **Impact 3: Developing the agency, confidence and political knowledge of young people so they themselves can effect change**

We have provided over **100 young** people from marginalised communities with opportunities to enhance their voice through political art. Key points along this journey include: two exhibitions at the Sidney Cooper Gallery (2017 and 2018), Canterbury; a programme of over 20 politically engaged artistic practice workshops in Dover and the Rhondda Valley; a ‘Political Carnival’ as part of the ESRC Festival of Social Science (2019), which ensured a wider engagement with young people from regional communities.

Our young people report how the work gave them the confidence to engage with challenging political discussions with the public and staff on the floor of the Tate Modern. Consequently, they were able to tackle elitism head-on [S6].

The Principal of Astor College, Dover writes: ‘The opportunities from participating in the projects has benefitted the pupils in many ways and it is a testament to the vision and purpose of the project that so much has been gained and achieved.’ [S5] As one participant (who before this project had never been to London, even though living in Dover) states: ‘I used to be quite timid and stuff... and that helped me to become more confident in everyday life.’ [S6]

This increase in confidence has come alongside an increase in political knowledge. As one participant states: ‘I feel like I’ve learnt I need to focus more on politics and what’s going on in the country instead of just not caring about it at all.’ [S6] The Artistic Director of Sparc states: ‘Professor Bates and his colleagues enabled participants in the project to have the confidence to tackle these complex and challenging political issues head-on.’ [S3]

The impact on participants also reaches beyond the floor of Tate Exchange. In 2018, young participants from Valleys Kids spearheaded a campaign to save their youth club from austerity cuts. The Artistic Director of Sparc states: ‘We talked about the experiences we had previously at Tate with the support of Professor Bates and ways that we could effect change.’ This resulted in the creation of a bilingual social media campaign, influenced the making of a pop-up youth club installation in year 2 of Tate Exchange, and a film about their experiences, political journey and growing confidence viewed by over 10,000 people through different channels. The work of the young people received a nomination for a National Youth Award 2018. The film was also presented to the Local Council Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council. As a result, funds were redirected by the Council to ensure that the youth club remained open as a front-line service for one day per week.

## **5. Sources to corroborate the impact**

### **People**

S1. Head of the Tate Exchange Programme. (These testimonies concern institutional impact on the Tate Exchange Programme.)

S2. Director of Learning and Research, Tate. (This testimony concerns the impact not only on the Tate Exchange Programme, but on Tate Galleries more widely.)

S3. Artistic Director, Sparc (formerly ArtWorks). ArtWorks was an award-winning youth arts development project under the umbrella of Valleys Kids a community development organisation in the South Wales Valleys. (This testimony pertains to practitioner, institutional and participant impact.)

S4. CEO Dover smART Project (an organisation founded in 2013 to provide opportunities for disadvantaged young people in Dover to take part in a wide range of creative activities and experiences to boost their confidence, enhance their well-being, raise their aspirations, and widen their outlook on the world.) (This testimony pertains to practitioner and participant impact.)

S5. Principal of Astor College Dover (a non-selective state high school, located in Tower Hamlets, Dover. (The testimony to the opportunities which the project opened up for Astor students.)

S6. Voices of young people, as part of our internal Partner Evaluation (2017; 18; 19). (This attests to the transformative impact of this work on confidence and political agency.)

#### **Publications**

S7. Tate Exchange (2017) – Year 1 Evaluative Report – ‘Exchange’.

S8. Tate Exchange (2018) - Year 2 Evaluative Report – ‘Production’.

S9. Green, K. (2018) *Let's Get Classy: Live Art, Class and Cultural Privilege*, Live Art Development Agency (LADA), esp. p.10. (Prepared by our lead artist for Year 1 of Tate Exchange, this sets the live art context for our work at that stage.)

S10. Green, K. (2018) *Ways of Getting Classy*, Live Art Development Agency (LADA). (This document key aspects of our practice as part of year 1 of Tate Exchange, including participant engagement.)